

**Testimony Re:****Raised House H.B. No. 6633 (RAISED)  
AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLANS FOR  
MUNICIPALITIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.****Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly's Housing Committee****Submitted by:****Yanidsi Velez, New England Regional Director, Hispanic Federation****February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Good morning, Co-Chairs Luxenberg and Moore, Ranking Members Scott and Sampson, and all distinguished members of the Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Yanidsi Velez, and I am the New England Regional Director for Hispanic Federation (HF), a non-profit organization seeking to empower and advance Hispanic communities through community programs and legislative advocacy.

HF's testimony is also informed by the leading community-based serving and advocacy member organizations and partners committed to improving Latino outcomes and opportunities in the state and as a member of the Growing Together Connecticut movement actively working to eradicate decades of disinvestment and exclusionary housing practices directly affecting Latinos and other diverse populations in the state.

I am here to advocate in full support of H.B. No. 6633 AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLANS FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING. As a state, we continue to face both immediate and unfolding health and economic impacts of a global pandemic, yet none more urgent than our state's housing accessibility and affordability crisis. Today, the need for housing reform is more pressing than ever and we need every tool to work together to end segregation that continues to pervade our state.

Prior to the pandemic, 50% of all Connecticut's residents were housing insecure, and the state's more than half-million Latinos and people of color were disproportionately represented in these populations- Latinos (57%), African Americans (56%), other people of color (55%)<sup>1</sup>-due to the long-standing and deeply rooted history of racial segregation sustained by restrictive housing practices such as redlining, discriminatory lending, and racially restrictive housing. Housing is the single largest expense for all households and particularly for low-income renters. Additionally, Latino households are the most severely housing

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<sup>1</sup> Data Source: IPUMS USA 2019|National Equity Atlas



burdened population in the state (30%). Without the housing burden, the estimated economic stimuli gain for the state in disposable income for all renters could be \$1.6 billion<sup>2</sup>.

HB 6633 provides a two-part strategy to create solutions for our state's housing crisis and urban disinvestment and provide sustainable pathways for growing a more equitable Connecticut economy; creating policies that will ensure affordable housing for all in the state. HB 6633 will advance proposals that strategically and equitably invest in urban communities facing serious challenges so that every family has a greater chance to thrive, no matter where they choose to live.

Fair Share Planning and Zoning is an innovative approach to land use that empowers local communities and opens the housing marketplace, leading to more and better affordable housing at all income levels. Combined, these efforts will broaden opportunity, attract big and small businesses, create thousands of jobs, generate billions in economic growth and tax revenue and ensure that our state will grow, equitably, for generations.

At this very moment, Connecticut can choose to lead with innovation and is able to make the necessary strategic investments in building inclusive communities of opportunity for our state's economic recovery. Passing HB 6633 and centering equitable practices and just housing opportunities is the development we need to ensure Connecticut's economic prosperity.

Thank you and we look forward to working together with you to do better for our communities, our state, and our shared future.

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<sup>2</sup> Data Source: IPUMS USA 2019| National Equity Atlas